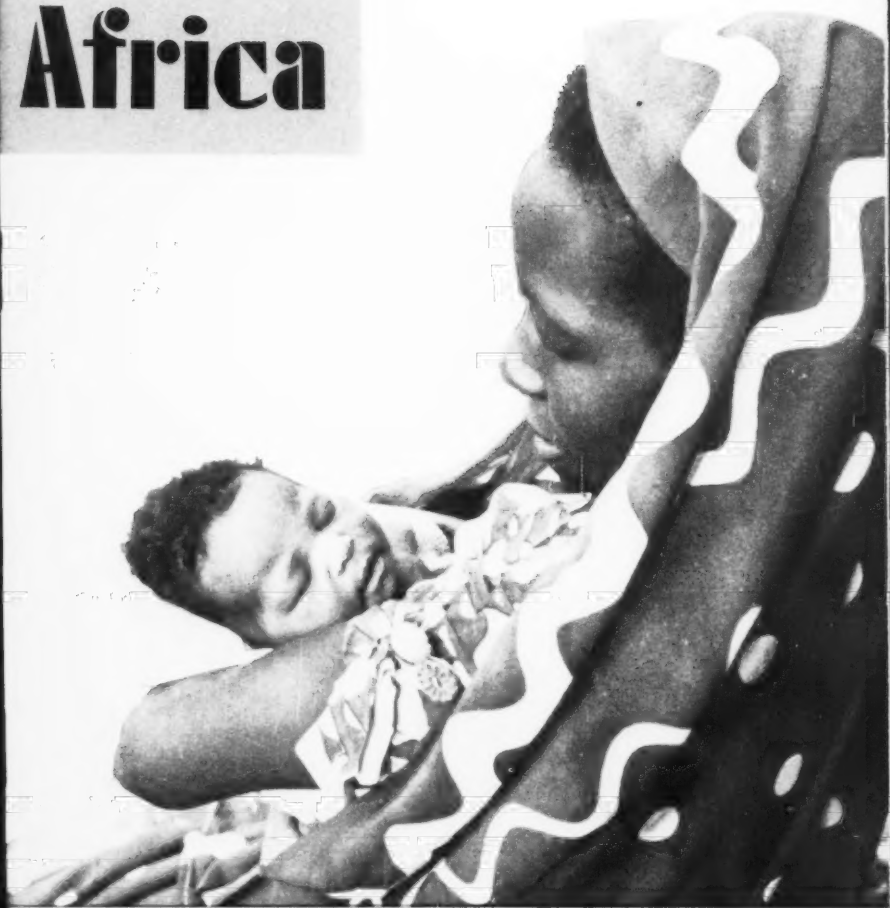


Africa



WHITE SISTERS

NOV - DEC.
1954



Our Greetings to You

A Blessed Christmas and may the Little King shower graces of
Peace on all the Benefactors and Friends of the
African Missions throughout the coming New Year.

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Christmas at Wapembe

Sr. M. Elie stationed at Kala Mission, Tanganyika tells how they celebrate Christmas at one of the Mission's outposts.

The day before Christmas, in the bright and early morning, the Christians come down the mountains in large groups; while at the same time, entire families disembark from their canoes at Wapembe on Lake Tanganyika. All go directly to the church to receive the Sacrament of Penance and cleanse their souls from the least stain in order to welcome the Divine Babe.

All day long, the people come from all directions. Many have walked five and six hours, carrying on their heads mats, which will serve for beds, as well as the food for the journey. Despite the torrid heat, the fatigue entailed, their faces radiate joy, as they arrive at the mission singing our old carols. Young and old await with reverential awe the solemn hour of midnight.

Ding, dong, ding, chimes our small mission bell. Immediately the church is filled to capacity and the hundreds remaining outside must be resigned to hear Mass as best they can.

The Holy Sacrifice begins and the entire congregation sings the Kyrie, Gloria and Credo . . . all give the maximum of their voices. Our ears may not find it too har-

monious, but the Divine Infant must be overjoyed at such good will.

Despite the over-crowded condition, everyone is deeply recollected. This is deserving of our admiration. It is true our Wafipa are reputed to be a polite tribe.

At the Communion, hundreds succeed hundreds at the altar rail. An old grandma dragged herself along on her knees to go to Communion. Their thanksgiving completed, they began to sing hymns. From the manger, the Infant Jesus seems to smile at these good Christians who never tire admiring Him.

Wapembe, the stronghold of several great witchdoctors is changing; but alas, Satan has still many worshippers. No pagan dare pass the rock of Wapembe without making an offering of flour and native beer. It is their deity. It must be appeased, if one wants a safe sailing or a successful fishing expedition.

Oh Divine Babe, reign and be Thou forever Lord and Master over this difficult portion of our Mission. May the good people of Wapembe sing each year with greater faith and love the angelic hymn: Glory to God on High and Peace to Men of Good Will.

Evolution of the Moslem Woman in Algeria

(A few months ago, under this title, Miss Halima Benabed wrote this very suggestive account in ALGERIA TAKES WING).

Any person who classifies people or things after a mere contact with them will say that the life of a Moslem woman in Algeria is very precarious and unsatisfactory, as compared to that of the European with whom they are dealing all day long, or to that of other women who are called "emancipated" — Turkish, Egyptian, Persian or Hindu.

Less than ten years ago a lecture on the evolution of Algerian women would have meant only one thing: its non-existence; but then it was a stated fact that the Moslem Algerian women in this twentieth century are still living as their ancestors; i.e., in the same ignorance as in the dark ages, and victims to family and social prejudices.

Does this go as far as believing that today the Algerian woman's evolution is accomplished or well on the way to its realization? Now, without giving in to an excessive optimism, and over-rating the results of the past five years of efforts, we may safely say that the essential elements are gathered and in working order, which consist in the girls' desire and firm intention of receiving instruction and of freeing themselves from age-long prejudices. Those signs of a spontaneous free choice are strong now among all the classes of Moslem society.

Undoubtedly only a very small number of women are able to be called "intellectuals" if we give that word all the efficiency it requires. Some twenty school teachers, as many maternity nurses, one doctress, two or three professors, a few University students, and some Lyceum pupils, together form a group too small to attract notice even if, for the sake of a large presentation, we add the number of girls who with only a slight knowledge of French, are considered progressive just because they dress and have their hair done like European women. Such girls are not to be among the pioneers; instead of being a help for those who aim at emancipation, their misguided evolution is more likely to be a hindrance and to bring discredit on the movement.

Now, if we want guarantees as to the evolution of the Moslem women, we cannot be satisfied with the actual small number of educated Algerian women, nor even with the presence among them of members of a County Council and delegates to Trade Unions; but we may rely on the spirit spreading now over all the towns, urging onwards to knowledge and progress.

The Algerians understand at long last that their evolution will be complete and of the right kind only if and when their daughters





*Will they ever
go unveiled?*



Pretty eyes which do not see the Truth.

are educated, just as their sons are. Besides, they have experienced how dangerous it was to leave aside that large portion of the population; i.e., its feminine element.

Until now, young men facing the marriage problem were to choose one of three ways: (a) marry an ignorant girl; (b) take the risks of a mixed marriage; or (c) remain a bachelor. It is no use insisting on the fatal consequences of all three propositions, equally unsatisfactory.

From now on, to be good-looking and an efficient housekeeper is not asking enough from a girl who wants to get married; the first condition is *education*; and that condition has become the forcible argument for persuading all the parents to have their daughters sent to school. There are other reasons for that, the deepest of all

being certainly Nature's own laws of evolution which ignore no living thing in Creation. And we know by now that the signal has been given and the leaders will be followed. Girls must be given an education. That is all well and good! Easy to say! But there is not enough room for all the applicants to our French schools. Congregational Schools where Arabic is taught, are just the very thing that could serve as a gangway for this generation, because the people are infatuated with the language of their forbears.

For the school-age children of today a beautiful result may be expected. Although our means are scanty and our equipment primitive, the pupils' eagerness for learning is great, and untiring is the teachers' zeal. The number of applicants is rising constantly. The mothers of our scholars sigh for

they must give up all hope of becoming learned. "Oh, dear! Oh, dear!", they sigh, "if only there were schools for us grown-ups." But if they have missed their chance they can find some sort of compensation from time to time: they are invited to all the school festivals and the meetings, and then they can admire those little Arab girls — their own children — reciting poems, giving stage performances. Some children and their parents contribute to the expenses of needy pupils, while others give generously towards the foundation of new schools.

When we discuss the question of education for the Arab girl, one item comes to our mind and on our lips immediately; the wearing of the long veil. In Algeria, only a very few women have discarded it although many of them are wearing Western clothes with great neatness, good taste and elegance.

Several students got their parents' consent to follow the whole of the college curriculum only on the one condition that once out of doors they wear the

long veil that covers head, face, shoulders, and reaches down to the heels.

It seems to us that in many cases, young women are longing to get free from that constraint, and their very fingers relax somewhat their hold of the veil, as if they were ready to let the whole thing fall to the ground. But no! . . . a kind of semi-religious respect for parental authority obliges them to comply with the important rules of social behavior.

Even now, and without being a prophet, one could affirm that "fashion" will influence the feminine ideas, and prove more conducive than the traditions, prejudices and symbols to do away with that portion of their garb.

As to those young men who remain adamant and continue to deny women such privileges, which neither religion nor plain good sense forbid, they will have to give in to evidence sooner or later; for women, as such, will see to it that their opponents face the accomplished fact.



Our Front Cover

One of our good Christian women whose only ambition is to have her little son follow in the footsteps of Mary's Son.

How many more African women would have the same noble sentiments, if they but knew of our Holy Redeemer and His Mother!

A VISIT TO THE KASBAH

(Our young Sisters who are receiving their special missionary training at St. Mary's tell us of their first visit to the KASBAH, the Arab section of the City of Algiers).

We went to the KASBAH the other day, that mysterious section of Algiers with its winding streets which are in reality steps of cobblestones ascending and descending into the obscurity of a perpetual twilight. For the most part, the houses join over the streets which are very narrow and shut off the sunlight forever from this little part of the world. But we found another darkness there much more terrible and more real than the gloom of crowded buildings and narrow streets; for, if it is dark in the KASBAH, it is still darker in the souls of those who live there.

In the market place where the men laugh and call boisterously to one another, we saw the veiled women gliding about like ghosts, going in and out through the stalls where greasy doughnuts are sold, stopping by the butcher stands where the meat is hung out in the open and covered with flies, and cases of flopping rabbits and squeaking chickens barricade the narrow passages, disappearing into the flickering darkness of little shops where Arab jewelry is sold.

We saw the little children in the streets, some of them chewing ravenously on a crust of bread . . . most of them emptyhanded . . . little ones whose deep eyes told of

the emptiness of their stomachs, the emptiness of their hearts, unloved, forlorn, being poisoned by the immorality all about them.

Back in the more quiet sections where the dwellings are, we visited several families. From the gloom of the streets, we found ourselves in a yet deeper darkness within. The women were almost always seated on the ground, grinding meal, and there were the children, numerous in every house, little ones with great black eyes and solemn faces that seem to have forgotten how to smile. Many families occupy one dwelling, seven persons sometimes sleeping on the floor of a little room not big enough for three. There, we met Zora, a pretty, black-haired girl, perhaps thirteen or so. She told us how she feared her coming marriage to a man she did not know, and there were tears in her eyes as she spoke. And then she added almost fiercely: "But our Religion is like that", as if trying to defend the belief that was making her no better than a slave. What could we do for Zora, except comfort her with kind words and tell her to pray faithfully to *Allah*, (God), and so we left her waiting in that dark house, for the day of her marriage to a man she had never met.

And when we hear the shrill of Arab music, the beat of the tomtoms and the din of the marketplace, or the shuffle of sandaled feet and the clatter of donkeys' hoofs in the cobbled alleys, we may imagine to be miles away from civilization as we have always known it . . . yet a few yards beyond the

doorsteps of this unwallled fortress lies the glamor and the glitter and the whirlpool of the modern city.

At night when they come out of their gloom and march up and down the streets, stopping in front of the brilliantly lit up shop windows that display all the requirements of modern life, what can be the thoughts of these Kasbah-dwellers? Is it a ravenous desire for all which they cannot have? Or the tired refrain of a secular fatalism? But as they slide back into

the darkness, we cannot help following the white-clad forms, trying to penetrate the impenetrable barrier; yes, we may follow them there, white-clad too as we are, and that God-conscious multitude will not object if our fingers run up and down the beads that hang on our sides, or if our lips almost inaudibly frame this prayer, "Lord of Light, illumine this darkness; may the Sun of Justice rise above the clouds of night; may the Dawn of Eternity shine upon us all . . ."



Boys Will Be Boys

Sometimes people ask if African children are like American children. Well here is a story and you can judge for yourselves.

It happened in a corner of Africa not far from Lake Tanganyika. The boys were not as quiet as they should be in church, so Father gave them a talk. "Look at the girls," he said. "They know how to behave; they are always good, etc., etc." (Perhaps the reason was that Sister was always sitting quite near the girls).

The boys listened to all Father said but were not pleased in hearing him praise the girls so much. That night they met to discuss the matter. Their pride was hurt, for after all, girls are only girls. They decided that something had to be done. They talked the matter over. Then suddenly their faces brightened. One of them had a good idea, which was accepted by all.

The next day the boys were in Church very early. Father was pleased to see every boy in his place even before the girls . . . they were so good too. . . . The girls arrived and the prayers began. Father looked at the boys. Really, they were like little angels, but what was the matter with the girls? They could not keep still. Some scratched their legs, others their arms and their faces. One by one they left the church until only the boys remained. Father looked at them and then he understood.

He went to the girls' seats and found them covered with a powder, the boys had got from a native plant; which, if it touches the skin, causes an irritation over the whole body. So you can understand why the girls were not so good as usual. What followed is a secret between Father and the boys.

—SR. M. HELENE



REGINA MUNDI reigns supreme in the hearts of the African Sisters.

MARIAN YEAR DEVOTIONS

Sister Edmund Campion tells of the Marian Year processions that took place at the African Sisters' Novitiate in Navrongo, Gold Coast.

Our novices and postulants have a great devotion to Our Blessed Mother. At the beginning of the Marian Year under Mother Superior's supervision they built a beautiful grotto about six feet high. Over the niche, in cut out letters was placed "I am the Immaculate Conception." Not a day has passed since then without our Queen and Mother receiving individual and collective visits from her African novices and postulants.

On all the Marian feast days throughout this year, Our Lady was honored with a procession. Oh, that was a sight which, once seen, was never to be forgotten!

They took place in the evening. After supper the dishes were quickly washed and the table set for breakfast in next to no time.

The first procession was made in union with the Parish. Each one carried a candle and sang, as only Africans can sing, hymns in their own language as well as in English and Latin. Yes, it was truly lovely to see this torchlight procession, but it was the second one which stands out most in my memory.

This time it was just us; that is, the novices, postulants and Sisters who staff the Novitiate. Since we only had a few candles, it was

thought best to use them to decorate the grotto. It was beautiful to see it thus lit up at night and gave the impression of a little corner in Heaven.

As for ourselves, we took every kind of lamp that would burn and started off in procession two by two. The only large lamp we had was confided to the tallest postulant who led the way, to our great surprise with the lamp on her head. Off we went, a hymn was sung and a decade of the rosary was said; then another hymn and another decade of the rosary, until we reached the mission church. We stopped to sing a *Salve Regina*.

When we began the procession again, I noticed two novices were carrying the lamps on their heads. There were more hymns and prayers as we continued along the way. By the time we reached the grotto, all the novices and postulants had their little lamps on their heads. Yes, it is a fact, the Africans prefer to carry things on their heads. They claim it is easier than by

hand. They can carry as much as fifty pound weights on their heads without any effort at all.

Another time we introduced the idea of carrying a statue of Our Blessed Mother in the procession. The novices and postulants were delighted with the idea and their big round eyes followed Sister's every movement as she placed the flowers around the statue on its small portable platform. "Sister," they asked, "who will carry Our Lady?" Imagine the surprise and joy of the two African Sisters, who help in the Novitiate, when they heard they were chosen! Everyone was pleased and I am sure Our Lady was too.

There is another touching incident which impressed me. During the rainy season, here in Navrongo, one can always see just when it will rain. One or the other of the novices would always go and take the statue of our Heavenly Mother from the grotto and bring it to the convent to protect it from the rain. A touching demonstration of their love and respect for Mary.

Our Sisters in Nyasaland and Rhodesia are most grateful for the spiritual books and "Geographical Magazines" which were sent to them. They are a great help for the African Sisters and the schools. If our readers happen to have any more such books and would like to make an act of charity, please forward them to:

The White Sisters, Lilongwe Mission,
Nyasaland, British East Africa

or

The White Sisters, Cilubula Mission, Kasama P. O.,
N. E. Rhodesia, British East Africa.

Medical Work at Nandom

Thanks to the help given by the Catholic Medical Mission Board, the Nandom dispensary will be better equipped for some time to cope with the needs of the thousands of Africans who live in the surrounding area.

The needs of the people can easily be imagined when one considers that the nearest hospital is 30 miles away. Another reason why the people are attracted to the Sisters' dispensary is the fact that they can speak and be understood in their own language.

Men will ride their bicycles as many as 20 miles on zigzag routes to come to the dispensary to get the much needed medicine either for themselves or for someone in their village. Sometimes, not being able to describe accurately the disease, they will ask the Sister to come and see . . . and then lead the way over rough paths through millet fields and only the most rugged of bicycles can stand the strain of such rides.

When patients are in a dangerous condition, yet strong enough to be carried on a stretcher made of millet stalks, they are brought to the huts near the church. These



Emiliana bending over the first twins born at the maternity, with their mother.

serve as a hospital; so that, the Sisters can give them better care.

This make-shift hospital is in the native style of round huts. There is also a maternity hospital composed of huts. During the past six months there were over 200 births and 10 sets of twins. One hut serves as an operation room while the others shelter the women either awaiting their turn or resting for a few days before walking miles to their homes. When we first arrived at Nandom, we found it very strange to see a woman going around the place a few hours after the birth of her child. Yet here it is the usual procedure.

Emiliana, one of our good women, devotes her life to the mission. She spends her time on duty day and night helping the pregnant women, pagan as well as Christian, who come to the Maternity. She watches particularly over the babies; so that, none of them leave this world after a first view of it without being baptized.

Another important medical work is the leprosy center. Once a week more than 300 lepers come from distances as far as 18 miles to the White Sisters' house to get the magic medicine which will cure them of their dreadful disease.

From thence they go to the dispensary to get their sores treated.

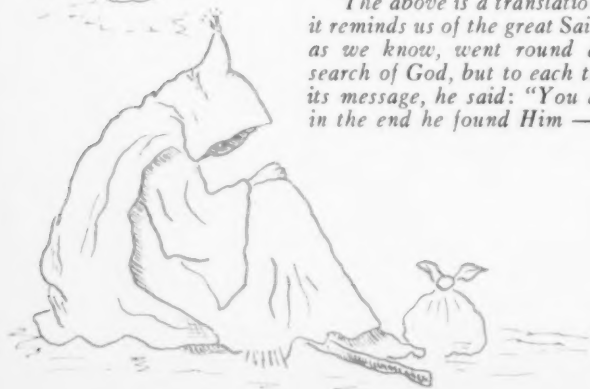
On their weekly trips through the villages, the Sisters keep a sharp look-out for any "pink spots" of leprosy, so as to have the people start taking the medicine before the disease gets a strong hold on their system.

This is but a glance at the medical work done at Nandom. The giving out of medicine and the caring of the body are the means used to reach the soul and slowly open it up to God's Grace.

MOTHER ISAAC JOQUES, W.S.

Taking a rest near the dispensary before returning to their homes far away.





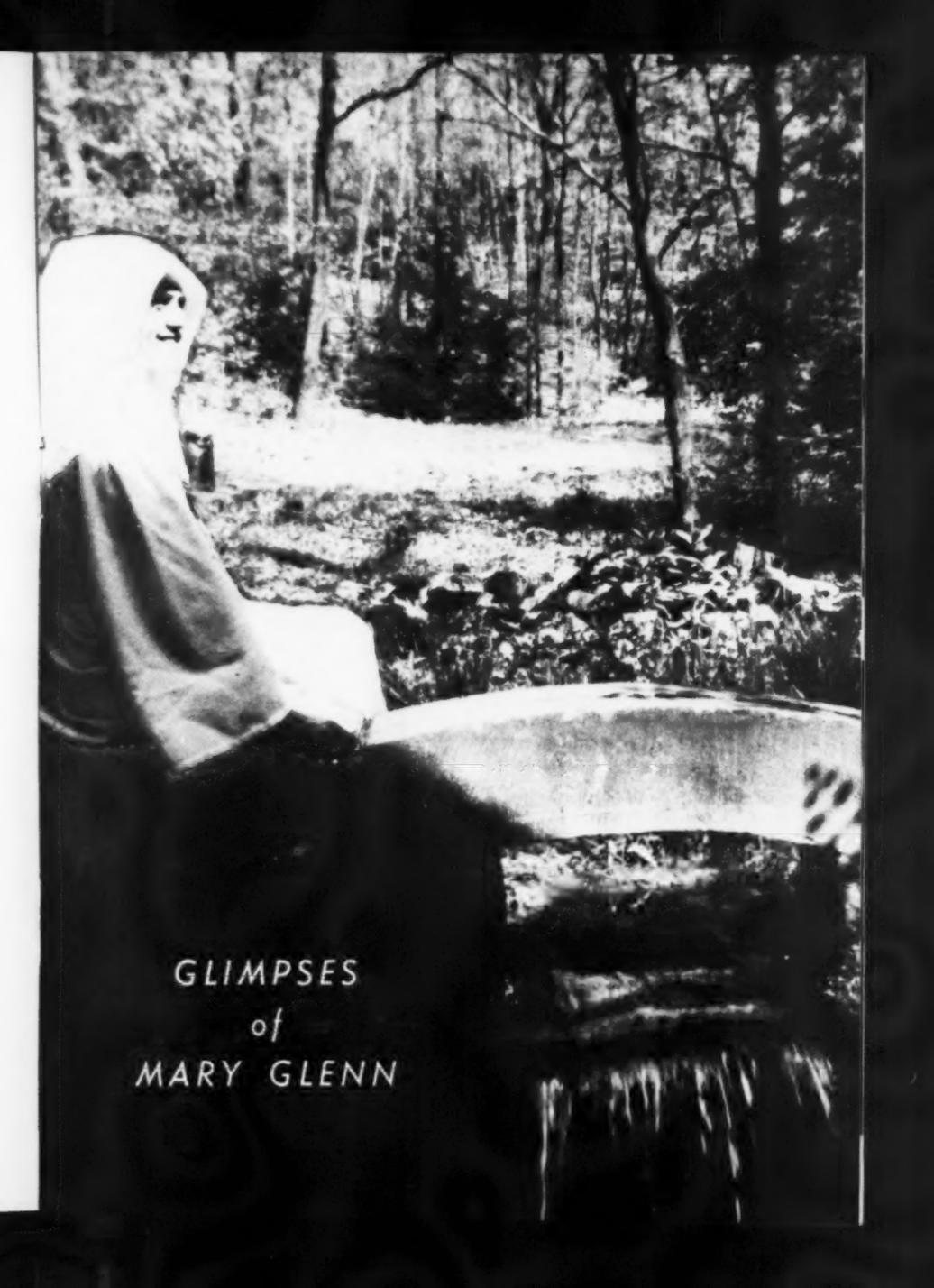
The Creator Is All

It was in the following manner that, one day, Created Things discussed their powers:

Said the Hail Storm: "What am I? One ray of sunshine can melt me into nothingness." "Well," said the Sunbeam, "as for me, one tiny cloud can completely dim my brightness." "But I must needs hurry away from one breath of wind," answered the Cloud; whilst the Wind replied; "Yet a wall can check me." In humble tones, the Wall said: "Am I able to prevent the rat from gnawing its way through me?" To which the Rat replied: "And I, do not know how to keep out of the way of the cat who lies in wait for me so patiently." "Alas", cried the Cat plaintively, "man can soon put an end to my existence. In one short moment he can finish me." Then said the Man with a sigh: "For me, there is nothing in the end but death. That I cannot escape."

Death now spoke, being allowed to do so: "May God be praised! He alone is all-powerful, and because I come straight from Him, nothing at all in the end can escape from me. God Is All."

The above is a translation from the Arabic; it reminds us of the great Saint Augustine, who, as we know, went round about Creation in search of God, but to each thing as it told him its message, he said: "You are not God," and in the end he found Him — within himself.

A black and white photograph of a woman in a white hooded garment, possibly a nun, sitting on a stone bridge over a stream. She is looking towards the camera. The background is a dense forest with many trees. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows.

GLIMPSES
of
MARY GLENN



On Sept. 8th, Mary Glenn, the new Postulate of the White Sisters, was blessed by His Excellency, Bishop McManaman and placed under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception.



Aspiring to become fervent auxiliaries of Our Lady in her conquest of Africa, the Postulants begin and end the day with a hymn of praise to Mary.

The White Sister's cell is far from extravagant—simple bed with straw mattress, sheets and blankets, white wood night table and small stool... but this does not prevent sweet dreams.





Whether they eat or sleep or whatever they do, they do all for the Lord.



Mending, washing, ironing, yes, even cooking! It is surprising what can be done with a bit of good will and a Sister to show you how.



Rita hopes it will not be too long before she is allowed to play for Mass and Benediction.



Being sacristan is a great honor, especially when we are allowed to dress the Little Jesus — just as Mary did.



A certain number of hours each day are set apart for study . . . there is so much to learn when one wishes to become a Missionary!



There are moments of leisure too during which they dream of the Sahara Desert or the African Jungle.



No volley ball net as yet, but that does not matter as long as we have a ball and a clothes line.



At the end of a busy day a happy group of "pioneer" Postulants listen to fascinating stories of Africa told by a veteran of the Missions.



Night falls, and all gather in the Chapel. "My God, I present myself before Thee at the close of this day to adore Thee . . . and to thank Thee . . ."



*And while they sleep, the Infant Jesus with His Blessed Mother watches over
Mary Glenn . . . and the Promised Land of the future Missionaries.*

God Loves the Dagarti

By SR. M. ELIZABETH OF THE TRINITY, W.S.

In the last article on the Dagarti Tribe mention was made of the formidable obstacles that prevented the Dagarti from being converted. In this article you will find how God manifested His power and how they embraced our Holy Religion.

In a village near the White Fathers' mission, the chief was dying. His devoted subjects had offered many sacrifices at the witchdoctors' orders, and had given him all sorts of medicines, but the evil spirits were stronger, for life was slowly leaving his emaciated body. At last, one day, he seemed dead: his body was cold and rigid, without apparent breath. All through the village went the sad news: "The chief is dead!" and from each hut came wails of mourning. He was not dead, though, and his eldest son, after long efforts to revive him, thought: "We have done all we could, except one thing — ask the Whites, the three Whites who live on the hill; we know they are powerful, but we never go to them. Still, what if they had the cure? We should try . . ." And the young man shouldered the inert body of his father and shouted to the grieving family: "I am going to the Whites", and ran up the hill, followed by a crowd of curious villagers.

"Look, Father, you see this man who is dead; the spirits could not cure him . . . But you, or your God . . . ?"

The missionary understood what a marvelous opportunity this

was. Before getting the medicine, he entered the little hut where his Master lived, the God of all: "O Lord, prove Yourself now. Show your power that they may see and believe." This should be the prayer of all Catholics, this prayer of the Wise Man: "Show Thyself, O Lord! Show Thy power to save them!" Then Father injected a dose of camphorated oil in the inert body. Was it a miracle of science or the answer of God? Anyway, the chief opened his eyes, got up, and walked back to his village without help, to the joyful wonder of his subjects who had been mourning him!

"The Whites are very powerful" . . . so commented all the Dagartis. We who have the Faith may believe that God very strangely extended the power of camphorated oil, to the point where one injection put a sick man back on his feet after weeks of illness! The Fathers did not call the event a resurrection, nor speak of a miracle: such words frighten our critical minds, so suspicious of supernatural happenings. No, they considered it simply a proof, a little sign which would not be forgotten.

Months passed after the cure, and the planting season came.

Each year from the month of May, there is great activity in the huts, for the crops must be planted and cultivated. That year, for six months there had been no rain; the soil was dry, the bush scorched; the Dagartis waited anxiously for the first rains to plant their crop of millet. O life-giving rain, would it not come? For millet is the staff of life, and millet needs rain to grow . . . but the sun continued to beat down on the dry earth, and more weeks passed, while fear became every day stronger in the huts: a late planting means famine, and that word has a special meaning in a land where there is no other food but the inevitable porridge. The witchdoctors were consulted continuously, and many were the victims offered to the ancestors on the sacred stones. Each morning

all eyes turned heavenward, searching for the great black cloud that meant a storm . . . But the spirits remained deaf, and there was no rain.

Finally, the ancients gathered for a council, under an enormous tree: the heads of families, the witchdoctors, the influential men of the villages. They discussed the causes of this terrible dry spell, but especially they looked for a remedy.

Then, one of the village chiefs said: "I know what to do. The Whites can give us rain."

The others were shocked: "The Whites? But we have decided never to go to them! Let them stay in their place, and we will stay in ours!"

But the old chief insisted, "They are very powerful, I tell you. I was sick, I was dead, but the

Consulting the Witchdoctor





*If they give us rain we will
have to follow them.*

White man pricked me and I recovered, and have not been ill since. If we ask them, we will get rain."

"Well, perhaps," reluctantly admitted one gray-bearded witch-doctor, "but, if we go to them and they give us rain, we'll have to follow them . . ."

This is true logic indeed, coming from people whose minds may not be developed, but who quite reasonably cannot understand how one may see the truth, and not follow it!

But this truth would mean a tremendous upheaval in their lives, and they feared it; so they waited and waited, until one day the

shadow of famine forced the villages to send a representation of twelve ancients to buy rain from the White Fathers. They walked along the twisting path in solemn silence, each one carrying the white hen of sacrifice under his arm.

"Father, the villages have sent us to ask you: 'How many hens does your God require before He will give us rain?'"

"Our God does not want sacrificial hens. Our God is very rich! He is a great Chief Who gives when He wills and to whom He wills!"

"How can we ask Him, then?"

"Go into His house. There His Spirit dwells. There you can ask Him."

The ancients filed slowly into the humble chapel, and were immediately intrigued by the mysterious statues, the little altar covered with flowers . . . Here the Spirit of God resides, the Father had said — They prostrated in a profound reverence, elbows on the ground, then the eldest made the request, holding up his white hen as a sign of their willingness to offer sacrifice: "God of the Whites, if it is true that You exist and if it is true that You are powerful, show us Your power! Send us rain, save us from death! And if You give us rain we . . . we will follow Your road."

And almost before the prayer was finished, and while the elders still lay prostrate before His altar, the God of the Whites answered: from a cloudless sky, the rain fell in torrents, bouncing off the thatched roof of the little chapel!

The prompt answer, so unexpectedly prompt, terrified their pagan hearts. They did not try to reason that this storm was a natural occurrence, that the wind might have driven the clouds away; their logical minds knew that He Who sends the winds and the rain to the earth is a living God, Who hears, and Who answers . . .

God had proved Himself in His own way, and the Africans do not argue with God.

The twelve ancients left the chapel, still dazed by the divine response, and returned in haste to their villages. They would start planting the millet, of course, for one must live . . . but especially would they spread the Good News: "We can no longer remain as we were, we must follow the God of the White, for we have seen what He has done for us!" The time of marvels had begun, and each village has its own story to tell of the reasons for its conversion: to each there were given signs, proofs of the love of God. The Spirit of Pentecost breathed on the people of the Volta, for the history of the early Church repeats itself in these new lands, and God is always the same. He loves the Dagarti, and His grace brought these simple people from their huts 25, 40, and even

60 miles away to ask the Fathers: "What must we do?" This is God's grace, for which all Christians pray when they say: "Thy Kingdom come . . ." We all say it every day; and behold, the kingdom of God came, along all the roads that led to the Mission. They said: "Father, put our names in the book for Heaven," for Father had a big book, and all

wanted their names in it. Then, the Dagartis being an extremely practical people, they would add: "How much does it cost?"

Yes, how much does it cost, to be registered in the book for Heaven? Well, it costs a great deal, a

very great deal. Eternal happiness cannot be bought with nothing! Father could tell them about that, he who had left his country, his friends, his parents, in order to buy Heaven for himself and them!

Now he spoke plainly and truthfully. He would not deceive these simple, naive people who wanted a heaven where they would never be hungry or thirsty or hot . . . He would not take advantage of their naivete to make mass conversions to his Faith; he would not hide the difficulty of reaching the goal, nor deceive them into thinking that the road to heaven is an easy one. No, each

Young girls desirous of devoting their lives to the salvation of African souls as White Sisters, should apply for information to:

**MOTHER SUPERIOR
WHITE SISTERS' CONVENT
MARY GLENN R-D-2
FRANKLIN, PA.**

man must freely choose, knowing the whole truth, for he is free and must remain so. They are poor Christians who become so under pressure. One must not embark on the Christian way of life without knowing what it entails, and what it will cost.

THIS IS THE PRICE OF HEAVEN

"How much does it cost? It is very expensive, you must understand, and you are not obliged to pay it."

First, four years of Catechism—at least four years! No one receives Baptism without knowing about his religion, its mysteries, and the obligations he is contracting.

But here are people who have never studied: How can these abstract, supernatural mysteries be absorbed by poor untrained minds who know only a purely materialistic existence? "But, Father, how can I possibly learn all that? These beautiful things cannot get into my poor hard head." And yet, this is the unshakable rule: four years of study as a proof of good will and perseverance, for they are told: "God is worth all the trouble, and so is Heaven, believe me; God is worth it!"

This is not the only difficulty. There is another formidable obstacle in the intimate life of the Dagarti. One chief learned about it when, having heard of the heaven of the Whites, he told his five wives: "Tomorrow, we will go to the Fathers to be registered for Heaven." So, the next day he arrived at the Mission in full re-

galia, with his lance on his shoulder, followed at a timid distance by his wives in their leafy costumes:

"Father, what must we do to pray with you? You see, in my hut we all want to go to your heaven . . ."

"These are your wives?"

"Yes, Father, they are all mine, and all paid for . . . I have no debts." Poor man! For years his life had been conveniently organized, the women working as a team, preparing the food in turn, the children of all the wives playing together around the hut . . . according to ancestral customs and the ordinary way of life. And now, he learned that to become a Christian this life must be completely changed, four wives must be dismissed, the family must be disbanded, the fields might not be tilled for lack of workers, and perhaps some days there would not be even that single meal. To recoil from paying such a price is natural . . . Those who, for the kingdom of God, have had to rearrange their lives know what anguish is contained in the word "conversion".

From a materialistic viewpoint, it could be asked: "Should one ask for such a sacrifice from them? By making them Christians, you make them suffer." This is the crux of the problem of civilizing, of converting, of colonizing.

They say, "By making them Christians, you make them more unhappy." The messenger of God who comes to show souls what God wants feels this distress

when he tells the pagans what the Faith requires. But one must always start thinking from God, and not from Man. God cannot deceive us or Himself. He cannot require of men something contrary to their best interests. The law of God is not a list of arbitrary prohibitions; it is a code which governs the right development of our human nature, and therefore brings us true happiness.

Therefore, those who were frightened by the prospect of enormous sacrifices were told: "You are free; you have four years to think about it, and to try. Be sure that God does not deceive, and that He makes men happy."

Then, in addition, there were all the signs of God, the proofs of

His power, the faith of the missionaries, the prayers of Christians all over the world—perhaps, even, unknown except to God, the meritorious suffering of certain souls, for conversions like that of the Dagarti do not happen without sacrifice!

Anyway, in spite of the obstacles, crowds climbed the hill to the Mission, and thousands of men and women paid the price of their "inscription for heaven". Now, 25 years after the opening of the first mission, over 56,000 Dagarti—more than one-fourth of the tribe—are Catholics: extraordinarily rapid results in such a short time. Yes, truly God loves the Dagartis! And the Dagartis love God. In the next Issue you will find the proofs of their love and Faith.

Rev. Lawrence Kyemalo, the second Dagarti priest.



FROM OUR SISTERS' *Letters*



Sr. St. Richard and little Peter

Sr. M. St. Richard stationed at Ilondola Mission, Northern Rhodesia, tells of her first baptism.

We were called to nurse a young mother and her new born babe in a distant village. But the way of Divine Providence is different from ours and God wanted us to go for another reason. We arrived at the village and, after the usual greetings, congratulated the mother and admired the nice baby. By the way, do you know that negro babies are white the first few days? After giving the mother and her little one the necessary care, we started back home.

Hardly had we left the village when we met a woman with a baby in her arms, who was crying in a queer way. The poor little one was about six months old, very, very thin and covered with wounds. We learned that his mother, who had been one of the chief's numerous wives, had died and the little one was forsaken.

Realizing that the baby would not live, I had the thrilling joy of baptizing him, there on the way.

Some women, who were accompanying us, knelt beside me while I poured the water on the forehead of the baby and made him a child of God.

A few days later, we heard that little Peter went to Heaven. I could not but think of the mercy of God and His Divine Providence, which called me to take care of the sick in order to save a soul.

Sr. Paul Emile writes from Ipuskiro, Rhodesia.

Vacation time is welcome everywhere, even in Africa. But one may wonder what a White Sister's occupation is during these days. Being up to date, we spend a couple of weeks near a lake or in the bush. Let me tell you something about it.

On a radiant morning we collect everything we need for a fifteen days leave and make haste, since we wish to reach as soon as possible our "promised land" called Mbabala. As we live on an Island and plan to go to another

one, we have the pleasure to make the trip by canoe. What a delight to go for a row and, as the wind blows rather roughly, we are going to be rocked a great deal by the waves of the large Bangweolo Lake. We will have plenty of time to enjoy it as we have to sail a whole day to arrive at destination.

As the sun is setting we approach Mbabala. You should see the little ones flocking on the shore and screaming, "The Ba Mama (Sisters) are coming, the Ba Mama are coming". With eyes as big as a quarter, they gaze and smile at us. They seldom see the Sisters come to visit them.

As you have already guessed,

the aim of our trip is to give religious instructions to the children who live so far away from the mission. On the following morning the little ones came from all parts of the Island. They are most eager to learn their catechism. Different groups were formed and I was assigned to teach a group of little girls desirous to make their First Holy Communion.

In the afternoons we visit the people in their homes, who like to talk with us and who complain that Missionaries do not come often enough to see them. We can only repeat our Lord's own words: "The harvest is ripe, but the laborers are few."

Visiting the people of the village.





NEWS

frequently. Statistics from two African missions will serve as a proof of it.

In Ouagadougou, French West Africa, where there is a Christian population of 25,000 there were in one year 650,000 Communions. In Kabgayi, Belgian Ruanda, where there are 350,000 baptized Catholics the Communions in one year were over five millions. The total number of Christians given includes numerous children who have not yet made their First Communion.

These are the fruits of the decree of Saint Pius X on Frequent Communion. Almost all the missions in Africa had their development since that decree and some were hardly founded when the decree was published. If in Africa, Catholics who in 1905 did not number one million, now surpass 15 million, and if vocations to the priesthood and the Religious Life flourish and abound, it is quite permissible to think that this progress is largely due to the fact of frequent Communions.

Queen Elizabeth of England conferred a number of honors on the occasion of her visit to Uganda, British East Africa. The only woman decorated was a White Sister. Sister Mildred was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (M.B.E.) at investiture ceremonies at Entebbe.

The citation was for Sr. Mildred's work in educating young African girls. She has been superior of Nabbingo College, senior secondary school, before becoming assistant secretary general for Catholic Missions in Uganda — first White Sister to hold that post.

First Pigmy entered the Preparatory Seminary. In Ruanda there are but few conversions among the Batwa tribe of Pigmies, while among the rest of the population they were very numerous. The fact, that one of the tribe will become a priest, gives hopes that conversions among them will be in larger numbers.

Frequent Communion . . . A feature of Catholic life in Africa, that always makes an impression upon visitors from abroad, is the great number of men, women and children who receive Holy Communion

One of the Chiefs of Tabora, Tanganyika Territory, Chief Kidaha Makwaia, was baptized in Dar es Salaam. He is one of the most influential men among the Africans in Tanganyika, and is a member of the Royal Commission. His brother, a former pupil of St. Mary's School at Tabora, was baptized at the same time as the Chief. Both are converts from Mohammedanism.

Doubling for Mary



December 8th will see the triumphant close of this wonderful year dedicated to our Blessed Mother, but it will not be the end of Mary's love for you and for her children of all lands.

A White Sister doubles for Mary as she mothers the poor little Africans.

Christmas will dawn in the wake of the Marian Year. The same old problem will confront each Sister . . . "How can I help the African children to celebrate the Christ Child's Birthday in a happy way?" . . . Christmas means joy, but it is hard to be joyful if the stomach is empty.

MARY LOVES YOU . . . Will you not prove your love for her by sending an offering to help those DOUBLING FOR MARY make Christmas a Blessed and Happy day for her little ONES?

*White Sisters
319 Middlesex Ave.
Metuchen, N. J.*

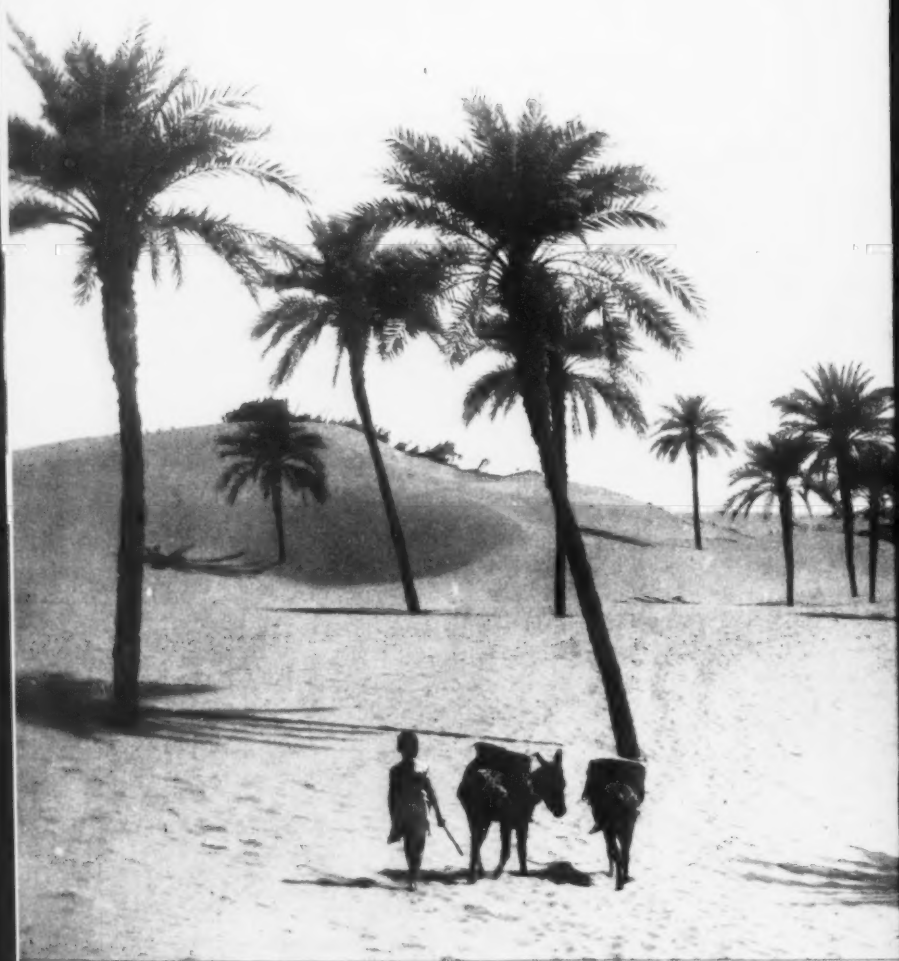
Dear Sisters:

Enclosed please find my gift to help make Christmas happy for Mary's little ones.

Name

Address

City *Zone* *State*



Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa

